

Appl. No. 09/710,025
Amdt. Dated May 14, 2004
Reply to Office Action of January 7, 2004

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed on January 7, 2004, is acknowledged. Applicants request reexamination of the above-mentioned application in view of the remarks which follow.

The Examiner objected to the drawings, stating that they failed to show second compartment 11b as described in the specification. The Examiner further objected to the drawings, stating that they do not include a reference sign 11b. Applicants' counsel wished to point out that reference sign 11b is shown in Figure 1 near the upper right hand corner. It includes a lead line pointing to the second compartment 11b. Accordingly, it is believed that corrected drawings are not required.

The Examiner next rejected claims 1-5 and 7-11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,623,542 to Schneider, et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,515,435 to DeBalko, et al. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

As an initial matter, it appears that the Examiner has inadvertently changed the designation of the first and second compartments in the course of making the rejection. For example, the Examiner initially identifies compartment 31 as the first compartment and compartment 32 as the second compartment of the device shown in Schneider, et al. Later in the rejection, the Examiner indicates that subscriber line module 91 is considered the first terminal located in the first compartment. Clearly, as shown in Figures 8 and 13, subscriber line module 91 is in compartment 32 which the Examiner identified as the second compartment. For purposes of responding to this Office Action, applicants has assumed that compartment 31, i.e., the telephone company compartment, is the first compartment and compartment 32, i.e., the subscriber compartment, is the second compartment. Using this terminology, subscriber line module 91 is the second terminal located in the second compartment for connection to a telephone of a telephone service subscriber. Therefore,

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applicants have considered the Examiner's position to be that Schneider, et al. fails to teach a first terminal located in the first compartment for connection to telephone service. Furthermore, applicants have assumed that the Examiner intended to combine DeBalko, et al. with Schneider, et al. to reach the conclusion that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate a first terminal located in the first compartment for connection to telephone service. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection regardless of which compartment in Schneider, et al. is considered the first and which is considered the second and which terminals are considered the first and the second.

Both Schneider, et al. and DeBalko, et al. clearly fail to teach "a plurality of coaxial cable connectors located in the second housing, at least one of the coaxial cable connectors being located in the first compartment and at least one of the coaxial cable connectors being located in the second compartment, each of the coaxial cable connectors facing the same direction," as required by claim 1. The Examiner has identified the coaxial cable connectors as elements 234, 269, ⁴⁶⁴464 and 250. As an initial matter, applicants are unable to locate a reference numeral 269 in Figure 13 and believes that the Examiner is actually referring to reference numeral 469. The Examiner identifies "connector 250" as being in the first compartment and asserts that "coaxial cables 236, 466, 467 and 232" are all parallel to each other.

Claim 1 clearly requires that the coaxial cable connectors must be located "in the second housing." The elements identified by the Examiner, i.e., elements 234, 469, 464 and 250, are the connecting portions on the ends of coaxial cables 232, 236, 467 and 466. They are not located in the second housing of the cable television module 620. Rather, the coaxial cable connectors located in the second housing are connectors 641, 642, 643 and 644, as shown in Figures 14 and 15. Furthermore, it is clear that coaxial cable connector 644 does not face the same direction as

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any of connectors 641, 642 or 643. Rather, it is angled with respect to connectors 641, 642 and 643. The Examiner appears to concede this point, as he identifies the coaxial cables 236, 466, 467 and 232 as extending in the same direction. This is not what is claimed in claim 1. Rather, claim 1 states that "each of the coaxial cable connectors" are "facing the same direction." Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 is not rendered obvious by the combination of Schneider, et al. with DeBalko, et al.

The same arguments apply with equal force to claim 7, which requires that "each of the coaxial cable connectors has a longitudinal axis and the longitudinal axes of all the coaxial cable connectors are parallel." The longitudinal axes of coaxial cable connectors 641, 642, 643 and 644 are clearly not parallel. Again, the Examiner has identified the cables themselves as, opposed to the coaxial cable connectors located in the second housing, as being the features of Schneider, et al. that have parallel longitudinal axes. Accordingly, claim 7 is considered allowable over the combination of Schneider, et al. and DeBalko, et al.

The Examiner rejected claim 13 as being unpatentable over Schneider, et al. in view of DeBalko, et al. and further in view of U.S. Patent No 5,721,396 to Daoud. Specifically, the Examiner applied Schneider, et al. and DeBalko, et al. as described previously but noted that:

Schneider and DeBalko, in combination, fails to clearly teach [that] the housing includes an opening and the longitudinal axes of the coaxial cable connectors are perpendicular to the claims defined by the opening. However, Daoud teaches such features as shown in Figures 1-4 for a purpose of providing or supplying as many different cables to the point of building entry as the number of subscribers to meet each subscriber's ongoing service requirements."

Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Daoud is directed to a building cable entrance terminal. It includes a frame 12 with frame walls 14 essentially forming a box

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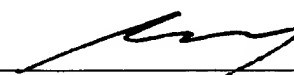
with an open top and a cover 50. A plurality of connectors (i.e., 82) all face the same direction, namely, toward the open top of the box. This is in contrast to what is shown in Figure 13 of Schneider, et al. Schneider, et al., like Daoud, also generally resembles an open box with a cover. However, in Schneider, et al., the coaxial cable connectors do not face upwardly out of the top of the device. Rather, they face different directions out the sides of the device. Accordingly, applying the teachings of Daoud to Schneider, et al. would require (1) rotating cable television module 620 such that all of those connectors now face upwardly out of the device and (2) moving coaxial cable connector 644 such that it faces the same direction as connectors 641, 642 and 643. There is no teaching or suggestion to make such radical modifications to Schneider, et al. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claim 13 is allowable as well.

The remaining claims, i.e., claims 2-6, 7-12 and 14-17, all depend, directly or indirectly, from one of the independent claims 1, 7 or 13. As the independent claims are considered allowable, the remaining dependent claims are likewise considered allowable.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants believe that all of the pending claims are in condition for allowance, and respectfully request early passage thereof.

If necessary to effect a timely response, please consider this paper a request for an extension of time, and charge any shortages in fees, or apply any overpayment credits, to Baker & Daniels' Deposit Account No. 02-0387 (72249.4). However, please do not include the payment of issue fees.

Respectfully submitted,



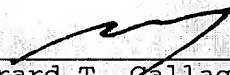
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Appl. No. 09/710,025
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